



MICHIGAN ADOPTION DAY

Giving thanks for families

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Michigan Adoption Day observed today *5th annual event celebrates adoptive families and children*

LANSING, MI, November 20, 2007 – Many Michiganians will have a special reason to celebrate this Thanksgiving season, as they welcome new members into their families on Michigan's fifth annual Adoption Day.

Thirty-three Michigan counties are holding Adoption Day events on or about November 20, the date designated by the Michigan Supreme Court as "Michigan Adoption Day"; about 220 adoptions will be finalized. The event is co-sponsored by the Michigan Supreme Court, the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS), the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE), and the Family Services division of the State Court Administrative Office.

Local events include finalizing adoptions and parties for adoptive families. Some counties are holding informational open houses with speakers and information about the adoption process.

Cynthia Billey, adoption staff attorney for The Alliance for Children's Rights and coordinator of National Adoption Day, said the Michigan event is the largest Adoption Day celebration in the country. "It is truly amazing to see each year over 30 counties participating, an unsurpassed achievement among all the states," she said.

Chief Justice Clifford W. Taylor and DHS Director Ismael Ahmed said Michigan Adoption Day is aimed at encouraging potential adoptive and foster parents.

Taylor noted that, while adoption finalization hearings are usually private, many participating courts are opening their adoption hearings to the public. "Michigan Adoption Day gives the public a window into the adoption process," Taylor said. "This is a celebration of adoption, but it's also very much about educating the public as to the challenges and great rewards of being an adoptive or foster parent."

"Adoption Day is a chance to see the joy of parents and children when a permanent family is created," Ahmed said. "People who might be considering adopting or fostering a child can learn from speaking with other families about their experiences."

While DHS and state courts strive to reunite children with their birth parents, doing so is not always in the child's best interest. Courts may terminate parental rights in cases of child abuse and neglect. There are about 6,200 children in Michigan whose birth parents' rights have been terminated; of those children, about 4,300 have adoption as a goal. Many children who are waiting for a family are older, members of minorities, have siblings, or have special needs as the result of physical, mental, or emotional impairments.

In fiscal year 2007, about 2,500 children were placed into adoptive homes out of the foster care system.

Anyone interested in adopting a child may contact MARE at (800) 589-6273 or visit the web site at <http://www.mare.org>. For more information about adoption, go to <http://www.michigan.gov/dhs>. For more information about Michigan Adoption Day events, visit the Michigan Courts web site at <http://www.courts.michigan.gov/supremecourt/Press/MichiganAdoptionDayIndex.htm>.

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